

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 DHA-02 SS-15 CU-02 HEW-04 AID-05

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01

SP-02 /067 W

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R 110419Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7864

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL UDORN

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 0484

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM SPOP SEDU SOCI LA GW

SUBJECT: LPDR ORPHANAGE: A POSSIBLE EXTENSION OF PRISON CAMP SYSTEM

1. WEST GERMAN AMBASSADOR TOLD EMBOFF THAT IN EARLY FEBRUARY HE VISITED THE SITE OF AN ORPHANAGE BEING BUILT BY MINISTRY OF INTERIOR BUT DECIDED AGAINST CONTRIBUTING FRG AID TO THE PROJECT BECAUSE "THE WHOLE THING SMELLED LIKE PART OF THE PRISON CAMP NETWORK." AMBASSADOR WAS PARTICULARLY SUSPICIOUS WHEN HIS GUIDE FROM THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR CALLED SOME OF THE CHILDREN EXPECTED TO RESIDE THERE "SOCIAL ORPHANS". "THE OFFICIAL SAID MANY OF THE CHILDREN TO GO TO THE ORPHANAGE WOULD BE THE URCHINS WHO SLEEP IN THE STREETS OF VIENTIANE, BUT I CERTAINLY HAVEN'T SEEN THAT MANY", THE AMBASSADOR SAID. ANOTHER INTERIOR OFFICIAL SEPARATELY TOLD CANADIAN AID WORKER THAT SOME OF THE ORPHANS WOULD BE THOSE BROUGHT BACK FROM ORPHANAGES IN RED CHINA AND VIETNAM WHERE THEY WERE SENT DURING THE WAR.

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2. AMBASSADOR WAS TOLD BY MINISTRY OF INTERIOR OFFICIAL THAT THE ORPHANAGE WILL ACCOMMODATE 2000 CHILDREN IN SMALL HOUSES SCATTERED IN LOCAL VILLAGES IN ORDER TO PROVIDE A NORMAL VILLAGE ENVIRONMENT. BUT WHEN AMBASSADOR VISITED THE CONTRUCTION SITE, ABOUT 67 KILOMETERS FROM VIENTIANE NEAR THE NAM NGUM RESERVOIR,

HE FOUND IT WAS A REMOTE CLEARING IN THE JUNGLE FAR FROM ANY VILLAGE. HE FOUND ABOUT 200 CHILDREN HELPING A FEW ADULTS CONSTRUCT FLIMSY DORMITORIES, EACH LARGE

ENOUGH TO HOUSE 80 CHILDREN AND ONLY ONE ADULT. NONE OF THE 200 CHILDREN WAS ATTENDING SCHOOL, ALTHOUGH INTERIOR OFFICIAL HAD TOLD HIM THERE WOULD BE SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN OF ALL AGES AND VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS FOR OLDER CHILDREN.

3. CANADIAN AID WORKER IN LPDR TOLD EMBOFF THAT ASIAN CHRISTIAN SERVICE PROMISED ABOUT \$80,000 TO CONSTRUCT A CLINIC AT THE ORPHANAGE.

4. AFTER ITS ESTABLISHMENT IN 1975, THE LPDR CLOSED DOWN A GOVERNMENT GIRLS ORPHANAGE BUILT WITH FRENCH AID AND A CATHOLIC ORPHANAGE IN VIENTIANE, LEAVING ONLY A STATE OPERATED BOYS ORPHANAGE WHICH NOW HOUSES ABOUT 100 GIRLS AND BOYS. CANADIAN AID WORKER WHO HAS BEEN HELPING LAO ORPHANAGES SINCE 1973 ESTIMATED THAT AT THAT TIME THERE WERE ONLY ABOUT 500 CHILDREN LIVING IN ORPHANAGES WHICH WERE WELL FUNDED BY WESTERN AID AND COMFORTABLE PLACES TO LIVE. SHE IS ALSO VERY LEERY OF THE PROJECT TO CONCENTRATE 2000 CHILDREN IN A SINGLE INSTITUTION, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE SAME OFFICIALS NOW PROMOTING THE NEW ORPHANAGE HAD CLAIMED IN EARLY 1976 THAT LAOS DID NOT NEED ORPHANAGES BECAUSE THERE WERE MORE LAO PARENTS WILLING TO ADOPT CHILDREN THAN HOMELESS CHILDREN. SHE SAID THAT THIS EARLIER POLICY

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TOWARD ORPHANS WAS SOUND SINCE NEARLY ALL OF THE YOUNG CHILDREN AT THE GIRLS ORPHANAGE HAD BEEN PLACED WITH FAMILIES WHEN THE GOVERNMENT CLOSED THE ORPHANAGE AND USED IT TO HOUSE THE FAMILIES OF LPLA SOLDIERS.

5. CANADIAN AID WORKER TOLD EMBOFF SHE FEARED MANY OF THE 200 CHILDREN MIGHT BE OFFSPRING OF "POLITICAL WRONG-THINKERS" WHO HAVE BEEN SENT TO RE-INDOCTRINATION CAMPS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
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Control Number: n/a
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Sent Date: 11-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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From: VIENTIANE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Review Release Date: n/a
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